

# THE ATPA

## History and Description

### History

In the mid-1980's, Michigan had the highest auto theft rate in the nation. Members of the Michigan Anti-Car Theft Campaign Committee (ACT) developed a concept that would combine the efforts of law enforcement, communities, and business against auto theft.

In 1986, Michigan's Governor and Legislature decided to try the ACT Committee's idea. So began one of Michigan's most effective weapons against crime: the Automobile Theft Prevention Authority.

Since then, the ATPA has led the way in reducing auto thefts in the state.

### A Successful Experiment

The ATPA was established with a sunset provision that automatically abolished the program unless it was renewed by the Legislature. The purpose of the sunset was to ensure that the program, created as an experiment in law enforcement, was doing its job as intended.

In 1992, the Legislature and Governor agreed that the ATPA should become a permanent state agency. The legislation was passed overwhelmingly in both the House and Senate.

### How the ATPA Works

The ATPA is funded by an annual \$1 assessment on each insured noncommercial passenger vehicle, plus interest earned by investing those funds.

It is governed by a seven-member board of directors appointed by the Governor which includes representatives of law enforcement, automobile insurers, and consumers of automobile insurance.

Each year the board awards grants to law enforcement agencies, prosecutors' offices, and nonprofit community organizations. These grant programs prevent auto theft, catch auto thieves, and put the thieves in jail.

The ATPA has five staff members at Michigan State Police headquarters in East Lansing. They conduct financial and performance audits on each program throughout the year and prepare reports for the board.

ATPA board members are liaisons sharing crucial information with key state and national officials.

Finally, ATPA board members and staff are involved in long-range planning. Regular meetings, including an annual strategic planning session, provide updated goals and objectives for fighting auto theft.

### Stretching Resources

Since its inception in 1986, funding for the ATPA has remained relatively constant. However, the cost of the ATPA funded programs has increased. For the past 15 years, the activities of the ATPA have drawn from these fixed resources in the most efficient and effective manner.

In order to stretch ATPA funds, the board requires grantees to provide matching funds for their anti-theft efforts. In 1993, grant recipients were required to provide 12.5% of total program costs. That match was increased to 25% beginning in 1994 and has become a hard match for 2002.

### Bucking the Trend

From 1986 to 2000, auto thefts in Michigan dropped over 25%. Nationally, thefts decreased 5% for the same time period. National and state officials have agreed that the ATPA is a major reason for Michigan's decline in auto theft.

As a direct result, major Michigan auto insurers' average rate of comprehensive premium, relative to other states, has been reduced. The \$1 investment by owners of non-commercial passenger vehicles has earned a good return of \$26.